

New Haven Peoples Center

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Testimony to the Judiciary Committee
Joelle Fishman, Coordinator
New Haven Peoples Center
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Sen. Coleman, Rep Fox and committee members,

I am here today as part of a delegation of many immigrant workers in our community to support changes in policy that will stop unnecessary deportations and keep families united.

The Secure Communities federal policy has resulted in innocent people facing deportation just because, as was the case with Mr. Josemaria Islas, of being arrested due to racial profiling. The immigrant community has been put into a position of isolation, being unable to trust law enforcement officials for fear of deportation.

Living in fear, and losing the family's main wage earner, is harmful to the individuals and their families, and it is also harmful to the communities in which they live and to the entire state of Connecticut.

The personal stories reveal tremendous challenges that individuals are faced with, and amazing fortitude as well as love of this country.

Immigration status is not relevant to, and should not be brought into play, in cases of minor violations or traffic stops.

The Trust Act, HB 6659 is an effort to address these very real concerns.

The time has come to reckon with the fact that many hard working immigrant families, our neighbors and co-workers, contribute significantly to our state's economy and well being. Undocumented workers make up 4.5% of Connecticut's workforce. Causing disruption and heartbreak and crisis to these families hurts us all.

The City of New Haven has hugely benefited from treating new immigrants as full community members. The State of Connecticut can also benefit by ending practices that are in fact discriminatory.

"Secure Communities" policies actually make Connecticut less secure. The Judiciary Committee and the General Assembly have the opportunity to correct this urgent matter.